Nonfiction Literature Circles

Cathy Chenoweth

5th grade gifted language arts and social studies

[Chenoweth\_c@fairfieldcityschools.com](mailto:Chenoweth_c@fairfieldcityschools.com)

* How could I use some of the factors that helped my students achieve success with literary text to help them achieve success with nonfiction texts as well?
* Could nonfiction literature circles help my students comprehend and enjoy nonfiction text more?

*My criteria for nonfiction literature circles:*

*\*student led discussion groups*

*\*based on informational text*

*\*with an element of student choice*

*(group, text, product)*

*\*My goal= connect to social studies standards*

*Harvey Daniels definition of literature circles:*

*\*"small, peer-led discussion groups who have chosen to read the same story, poem, article, or book”*

*\*based on adult book clubs*

“Knowing what you're aiming for (what makes a good discussion), experiencing it either directly or vicariously, and developing some guidelines. Above all-- students need to practice, practice, practice.”

- *Getting Started with Literature Circles* on www.litcircles.org

**Tips for Nonfiction Literature Circles:**

1. Intentionally, explicitly teach structure (see procedures).

* Encounter text once on their own.
* Reread text using harvest strategy.
* Prepare harvest strategy for discussion.
* Participate in group discussion.
* Revisit, reflect, apply.

2. Teach and use harvest strategies.

* Sentence starters: I thought… I noticed… I wondered… what if…
* Charts- connections/ questions/ new understandings

Annotating or coding the text

* Generating list of questions
* Post it notes
* Graphic organizers- skill or content specific
* Focus question

3. Choose nonfiction texts strategically- challenging, debatable, real world texts.

4. Develop guidelines/rules

1. Prepare for discussion.
2. Stick to the common text.
3. Use text evidence to connect your ideas to text.
4. Build on others' ideas.
5. Speak directly to classmates in group.
6. The leader will only ask questions.
7. Monitor your own participation.
8. Expect your thinking to change.

6. Give students time to reflect- on process and on individual participation.

7. Control student choice. Groups need to be balanced.

8. Vary format while keeping process routine.

9. Have students create a product.

10. Teacher facilitates.

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